

Enliven Your Prayer Life

Week 3: Examen

Opening Prayer: CLEANSE THE THOUGHTS by Walter Brueggemann

Every time we meet,

we pray that you would "cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit."

We present ourselves for that strange interface between our thoughts and your spirit.

We covet our thoughts that do not stay focused about getting out of church on time and errands to run after church and meals to purchase and folks to see;

our thoughts reflect our excessive busyness that leave us little time for our life with you.

And beneath busyness our thoughts are preoccupied with hopes that linger in disappointment with hurts that refuse to be healed with guilt that does not easily yield to pardon with estrangements that cut deep and remain open with can-do confidence about power and energy and achievement.

We think a thousand thoughts a minute...

of money and sex and control

and loss and death and

cell phones and loneliness

and good food.

And then you...

you who give light and wind and life,

you who watch over us with sustaining power

and disciplining presence;

you will us well and whole

and by stealth turn our lives in freshness.

We present ourselves

seekingly...grudgingly...that you will equip us to relinquish our thoughts that

we have thought too long and too often seeking that you will restore to us the joy of your presence seeking that you will make things new in our stale, weary lives.

What we seek, only you can give;

What we ask, we cannot find ourselves;

What we want is a gift

and the open graciousness to receive it on your terms.

Come Holy Spirit!

Reflection on Prayer Practice from last week--praying the Psalms

The Role of Self-Examination in Prayer

The Prayer of Examen--16th century origins, Ignatius of Loyola
Method for searching your soul before God

Psalm 139--"search me God, and know my heart" (v.23)

God knows you already. God sees you completely, just as you are. God can help you see yourself more clearly. Then God can help you strip away sin and pursue the good and godly characteristics that you embody.

"You have searched me, Lord,
and you know me.
You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.
You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.
Before a word is on my tongue
you, Lord, know it completely."

Being honest before God promotes a more authentic relationship and an openness to be transformed.

Noticing and identifying our sin gives us the opportunity to repent and receive God's forgiveness.

The Examen--5 steps

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

2 Truths to Keep in Mind

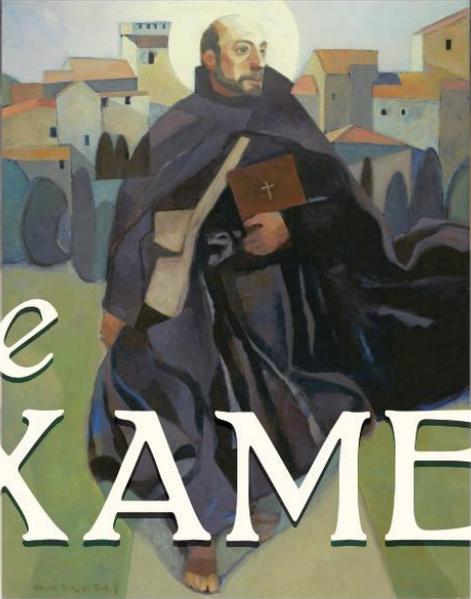
1. God loves us.

2. We have sin, failings, and human weaknesses.

Week 3 Prayer Tools: Examen and/or Journalling

Try the Prayer of Examen. See image on the next page as a guide.

Journal--write your prayers. Or write notes in response to "how is it with your soul?" Let your thoughts flow freely.



the EXAMEN

The *Examen* is a method of reviewing your day in the presence of God. It's actually an attitude more than a method, a time set aside for thankful reflection on where God is in your everyday life. It has five steps, which most people take more or less in order, and it usually takes 15 to 20 minutes per day. Here it is in a nutshell:

- 1** **Ask God for light.**
I want to look at my day with God's eyes, not merely my own.
- 2** **Give thanks.**
The day I have just lived is a gift from God. Be grateful for it.
- 3** **Review the day.**
I carefully look back on the day just completed, being guided by the Holy Spirit.
- 4** **Face your shortcomings.**
I face up to what is wrong—in my life and in me.
- 5** **Look toward the day to come.**
I ask where I need God in the day to come.

Version of the Examen from *A Simple, Life-Changing Prayer* by Jim Manney © Loyola Press